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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON WAR IN IRAQ

Summary

-- Lead stories in all papers published April 7-8, focus on developments in the war in Iraq. Front page reports highlight the "fierce" battles that took place around Baghdad yesterday. Commentaries April 8 allege the "Zionism" of Jay Garner

Editorial Commentary

-- "A Zionist prepares to rule Iraq!"

Daily columnist Fahd Fanek writes on the back page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (04/08): "The chiefs of the U.S. administration have disagreed on how to skin the bear even before it was hunted. The State Department believes that it should be the party concerned with ruling Iraq after occupying it and ousting its regime, while the Defense Department confirms it is the one for the task, and even went ahead and appointed one of the retired generals, Jay Garner, for that position. So who is this Garner? Garner was in charge of supplying food and shelter for the Kurds during the thirty-country aggression in 1991. He is now preparing to supervise the operation of reconstructing Iraq through American companies and international financing.. The Zionist bulletin, Forward, that is issued in New York, writes, with a bit of pride, about the personal aspects of this General, namely that he is a personal friend of Sharon's and one of Israel's staunchest supporters.. This is the American plan: to liberate Iraq from its national leadership and to appoint an American General who is a personal friend of Sharon's to manage Iraq's affairs in accordance with the requirements of Israel's security. Shall we live and see a Zionist occupying the throne of Aaron Rashid?"

-- "High Commissioner Garner"

Daily columnist Jamil Nimri writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (04/08): "Why is there not talk about a single political step that would confirm good intentions? Why does the United Nations, the European Union and the Arab League not have a part to play? This is different. Iraq is a spoil of war for which the mouths of the extremist right-wing group in Washington water. Iraq has been in the heart of the thinking of this Zionist, right-wing America for while. It is a project with regional ramifications, that the Zionists could not believe that circumstances have finally allowed its achievement, and with international ramifications that would guarantee the U.S.' total authority over the world for decades to come. The proposal, therefore, is, simply, occupying Iraq and managing it to serve a joint American-Israeli account. Meanwhile, a media campaign that holds contempt for the Arabs, despising their thinking and their understanding, portrays the war as a charitable and heroic action for the sake of the poor Iraqis, and shamelessly speaks about reconstruction contracts and oil projects."

-- "America liberated us from itself!"

Columnist Hilmi Al-Asmar writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (04/07): "Bush's soldiers came to liberate Iraq, but instead ended up liberating us and accomplishing what we have failed to achieve, namely unveiling its ugly face [the United States].. America launched its war to liberate Iraq from the 'dictator', but instead, the image of that dictator was purged and cleansed from impurities. He became the defender of his land and the resister of invaders, while the invader took over all the descriptions of a dictator, and put on the mask of the blood-sucking Dracula, and the story of his leadership of the 'free world' turned into a

ridiculous farce. Invading Iraq, whatever the consequences, is going to rewrite history and correct many lies that some people tried to pass on as facts. The most serious of these lies is the portrayal of America's role as a political mediator between the Arabs and Israel, when it borrows the diplomacy of the bulldozer and Sharon's expertise in doing house-to-house searches."

-- "91% of the Americans support the killing of Iraqis!"

Daily columnist Bater Wardam writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (04/07): "The American newspaper "Washington Post" said that 91% of the American people are 'comfortable with the ongoing war operations in Iraq' so far. What does that mean? It means that nine out of ten Americans find no problem with the way the war is going . which, in fact, means that they are comfortable with the killing of Iraqi civilians and children, the destruction of homes and facilities, the daily humiliation of people, the theft of oil, and the occupation of another country. For Americans, the war is nothing more than a video game that they are watching on their lying media outlets with their defense minister displaying a 'video clip' of American missiles and bombs as they explode on Iraqi 'targets'.. The Americans do not see the human suffering, the suffering of children and women, the civilian victims, the destroyed homes, the hunger, the thirst, and they do not care. They do not want to believe that their forces are using depleted uranium and cluster bombs, nor do they want to believe that their forces are kidnapping citizens from their homes and treating them as prisoners. They watch the news, are reassured that there are no major number of victims among their U.S. forces, and are happy that the oil wells are in the hands of the American army, and they go on back to their daily lives, running after dollars, alcohol and booze."

-- "The occupation is the beginning!"

Daily columnist Mohammad Kawash writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (04/07): "The Americans and the British will eventually come to the realization that the occupation of Iraq is not the end of the line, that it is not going to achieve security and stability and open doors for investment companies. Occupying Iraq will be the beginning, because Washington has no political solutions for Iraq that could overcome the historical, geographical, political and ethnic complexities and difficulties.. We are certain that the occupation of Iraq and its tragic repercussions are going to lead to entrenching the Arabs' and Muslims' feelings of hatred and animosity towards the United States. This in turn is going to lead to the creation of a state of instability inside Iraq that would extend to a number of countries in the region. This means that the entire region is at the threshold of a wave of violence, the consequences of which cannot be predicted.. These measures and plans are part and parcel of an America's project to liquidate the Palestinian issue, to reshape the Middle East, to nullify the Arab order, and to turn this region into small sectarian and ethnic states, which would nullify the joint Arab action and the Arab identity."

GNEHM